**Duties tell, accomplishments sell**

**Duty**: Respond to customer service inquiries via email and live chat platform.  
**Accomplishment**: Respond to an average of 176 customer service live chats and 203 emails per week, improving response time by 74% and customer satisfaction by 31% between 2016 to 2017.

**Duty**: Write articles for blog according to SEO best practices.  
**Accomplishment**: Write articles for blog according to SEO best practices, resulting in 53% increase in organic search traffic YoY.

Most people only list duties on their resume, but what good is that if the recruiter or hiring manager has no idea whether you’re good at it? Replacing duties with accomplishments can set your resume apart.

**Contextualize measurable results**

Measurable results are worthless without context.

“Signed $2M in new business in Q3” could mean wildly different things depending on the business. If each deal is worth around $10K and no one had ever sold more than $1.5M, this accomplishment shows that you’re a sales genius. But if each deal is worth $2M, well… at least you got one.

Detail your accomplishment as well as *why* it was a big deal for you and your employer. Using percentages (“…increased sales 34% YoY”) is one way to provide context.

**CAR and STAR aren’t just for interviews**

[**CAR**](https://thehiredguns.com/car-technique-secret-interviewing-weapon/): Context/Challenge, Action, Result  
[**STAR**](https://theinterviewguys.com/star-method/): Situation, Task, Action, Result

These methods are more commonly used to prep for interviews, both for interviewees and interviewers. They are also a great template for presenting your top skills and measurable results on your resume.

You won’t have room to address each of these items for every duty and accomplishment, but they can make your top selling points more impactful. What happened? What were you trying to accomplish? How did you deal with it? What was the end results?

**Use active voice and action words**

Using passive voice on your resume will make you seem insecure and unwilling to take responsibility for your successes. It also tends to be needlessly wordy, using up precious real estate and making it harder for a recruiter or hiring manager to read.

For example:

**Passive Voice**: Over 10,000 widgets were shipped each month by the department I oversaw.  
**Active Voice**: Managed the shipment of over 10,000 widgets per month.

Use strong **resume action words** (designed, eliminated, led) at the beginning of your sentences to focus your duties and accomplishments while showing off your confidence.

#### Fill employment gaps with side hustles

You don’t need a job to get to work. Add a side hustle to your resume to add new skills, fill resume gaps, and showcase an entrepreneurial spirit.

“I started some freelance work and my own project the month after my layoff to show I had other things I was focused on. This made a world of difference when I interviewed!”

## How to beat applicant tracking systems

There is no universal trick to “beating” applicant tracking systems. Getting past an ATS and landing a job interview requires a well-written resume that is mindful of ATS algorithms as well as the people pushing the buttons.

#### Here’s the simplest advice for how to beat an ATS:

* Carefully tailor your resume to the job description every single time you apply.
* Optimize for ATS search and ranking algorithms by matching your resume keywords to the job description
* Use both the long-form and acronym version of keywords (e.g. “Master of Business Administration (MBA)” or “Search Engine Optimization (SEO)”) for maximum searchability
* Use a chronological or hybrid resume format (avoid the functional resume format)
* Don’t use tables or columns as they often cause major parsing errors
* Use a traditional resume font like Helvetica, Garamond, or Georgia
* Don’t use headers or footers as the information might get lost or cause a parsing error
* Use standard resume section headings like “Work Experience” rather than being cute or clever (“Where I’ve Been”)
* Save your file as a .docx if possible